CA2ALHU30
68M27

CA2 ALHU 30 1968M27
Metis Study Tour Report, Sponsored by th
e Metis Association of Alberta. De 1
3 3398 00137 2258

METIS STUDY TOUR REPORT

December 1968

Sponsored by
THE METIS ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

Funded by
H.R.D.A. & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LIBRARY
VAULT 19

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2019 with funding from
Legislative Assembly of Alberta - Alberta Legislature Library

"...I refer to poverty as a social syndrome, a condition so hardened and so fixed by our economic, political, and social circumstances that it is likely to remain with us in the calculable future. For so long as we adhere to our present values, so long as we adopt sudden make-do methods of dealing with issues such as poverty, so long as we refuse to exercise foresight, so long will the poor be with us."

B. Seligman, 1967.

FOREWARD

The Metis Study Tour was initiated as the counterpart and complement to the Indian Association of Alberta tour of the previous year, which tour went under the name of All Chiefs' Conference, Indian Study Tour.

Ten Metis were hired and trained to do the field work required. Two groups of five each visited all of the principal Metis centers in the Province. They met together in Edmonton for interviews with government and private agencies. The Tour began November 29th, 1968. Nine days were spent on the road, and five days were used for visits in Edmonton.

The main purpose of the Tour was to obtain a minimum of information for purposes of policy making. It is clear that the manner of obtaining the data does not allow for a sophisticated statistical type of report. The reader will find that fact and opinion are intermingled throughout. However, the one thing that it indisputably accomplishes is that clearly and unequivocally serious, alarming problems currently afflict the Metis community in this Province. This document, which substantially presents the written observations of the recording secretaries of the Tour, presents a broad view that is candid honest, telling.

It is hoped that this Report will stir responsible people to intensified action. It appeals first and foremost to the Metis themselves, to the Province's Government and to the citizens of Alberta. An attitude that is extensive and far-carrying is immediately imperative, simply because Metis poverty is here-in revealed as being a deep-rooted pattern.

Joseph Couture,
Consultant,
Community Development Services.

Chapter One - Community Meetings

The following were communities contacted during the course of the Tour: Edson, Marlboro, Hinton, Muskeg, Grande Cache, Grande Prairie, Paddle Prairie, Fort Vermillion, High Prairie, East Prairie, Grouard, Faust, Slave Lake, Wabasca, Fort Chipewyan, Fort McMurray, Calling Lake, Lac La Biche, Fishing Lake, Elizabeth Colony, Boyle Street (Edmonton) Calgary.

Given the repeated request are the part of many of these communities that they not be given publicity and that the information given the Tour Group be treated in confidence, this section of the report will be presented under headings listed alphabetically.

1. Company of Young Canadians.

The Company has volunteers stationed throughout the Lesser Slave Lake area. While no one appeared to disagree with the philosophy and idea of the Company, there was however consensus as to the extremely poor image that this group has. The Tour Group was urged to take steps towards having the Company completely revaluate its behavior to date.

2. Culture.

A sort of helplessness was frequently encountered by the Tour when they attempted to discuss this subject. Such things as legend telling, Native game playing, Native dancing, still prevail in some areas. In the main however the language (Cree) is dying out. Much regret was expressed in this regard.

3. Education.

There is a general apalling lack of education and training for jobs. Opinion throughout the communities is unanimous in this regard. There is an alarming drop-out rate. Few boys get beyond the grade eight level. Drop-out begins at grades five and six. The average education of

the people visited is deemed to be at the grade four level at the most. One of the contributing factors is poor, sometimes no transportation for school children. Feeling was very negative and general with regard to the presence of foreign teachers in the schools. All teachers, regardless of origin, maintain little or no contact with the members of the local communities in which they teach.

4. Health.

Strong statements pertaining to health services were received by the Group. Invariably it was pointed out that there was no ambulance service available for emergencies. Whites will not help out when transportation to hospitals or for medical care is required. Nurses do not visit outlying areas on a regular basis, and when they do they are exclusive in the contacts that they make. Doctors and hospitals are usually at great distances away - this is relative to the mode of transportation available in most communities. The language barrier in many communities make for considerable misunderstanding of the health services available to Natives. In most communities water supply is a crucial issue.

5. Housing.

Everywhere, without exception, housing of the vast majority of Natives is sub-standard, i.e. small, overcrowded, of poor materials. A very small number of people are home-owners. There is discrimination against large families. In most areas suitable rentable lodging is just not available. There is universal resistance against suggestions from the "outside" to relocate to areas where better housing could be made available. By and large, in the houses presently in use there is no running water and no electricity.

6. Jobs.

Few unskilled jobs are obtainable. There is an over-supply of persons for these few jobs. In many areas the ridiculous standard of grade ten or better for unskilled positions is maintained by employers. In all areas the same complaint was encountered as to the job-training programs that have been carried out, i.e. there is no follow-up in the form of providing job opportunities for trainees, or of training people for jobs that do not exist in their home areas. There is profound disillusionment re agency efforts to promote vocational training. There is strong reluctance, for instance, to approach Manpower for help. It is felt that Whites get jobs before Natives do. In a number of areas Whites are brought in from the "outside" in preference to local Native labor.

7. Land.

Most of the Natives are squatters. When Native groups (local groups) attempt to negotiate to obtain crown land they invariably run up against the attitude: "You are asking for far too much land!" Land that is offered is always inadequate to accomodate a local group: "It is only good for living on, but not for living off of!" Without exception strong feelings were met over the issue of having to pay for land that the people cannot buy.

8. Law.

Law and its enforcement is a very serious problem in the Native communities. The most common offences are disturbing the peace, drunkeness, some breaking and entering. Those interviewed always pointed out that fines for minor offences are out of proportion with the nature of the crime committed. Prejudice against Natives is frequently encountered in the courts. It seems that Natives always have to put up bail, whereas

Whites for the same offences do not. Many complaints were made about police abuse and sometimes about police brutality. Railroading, over-charging, malicious provocation by law officers is frequent. The police are accused of refusing to obtain legal aid for prisoners, as well as refusing to obtain interpreters. The Natives are afraid to inquire about their rights for fear of reprisal. There is truly widespread ignorance of the law. There is a pathetic frequency of misunderstanding of the nature of the charges made against Native offenders. It is felt that in many areas Metis are scapegoated for White offences. There is full consensus as to the need for immediately providing Native court workers, fluent in the Native language throughout all of Alberta.

9. Metis Attitude.

Despite the discouraging material conditions of environment, it was heartening to encounter a strong attitude that "... we are capable of running our affairs. However we do need your help to get started..." Most communities feel that government representatives, from the civil service and from politics, are condescending and that the programs that they have strived to set up destroy people. Whites generally are viewed with suspicion.

10. Organization.

Every community visited had at least one organization going in the community. Attempts to organize and to persevere in this effort are shortlived. The universal complaint is: "We don't know how to organize and run things. Give us leadership training."

11. Welfare.

A most appalling situation is that of the welfare service to Natives! In every area there are high numbers of people on welfare, e.g. in one area it is as high as 80% for eight months of the year.

There is a discrepancy in application of welfare rates from one region to another. Welfare, as at present given, is considered to be degrading: it barely allows a person to subsist; he is kept below the poverty line ($3,000 per year). The annual average income on a provincial basis is not over $2,000. In some areas the average is as low as $600 per year! Surprisingly, in most areas prior to the mid 1950's welfare was unknown. Local inhabitants were able to live off of the land by hunting, trapping and fishing. Rendering hunting and trapping in off-season illegal has forced people onto welfare. In some areas people have to travel great distances in order to obtain welfare assistance. The assessment of needs by welfare officers is frequently unjust - deserving people get overlooked or by-passed. Most welfare officers are perceived as being very authoritarian, disrespectful of people and very indiscrete. The fact that the R.C.M.P. are sometimes involved in the assessment of need is deeply resented. When vouchers for food are given, the recipient is given no choice as to where he might have the voucher honored.

11. White attitude:

With one community exception, discriminatory attitude was encountered everywhere. The classical expression thereof is as follows: "There is no discrimination here, there are no problems in our town." Intolerance is prevalent on the part of White pupils and on the part of too many White teachers towards Native students. The indifference of many teachers is esteemed to be a strong contributing factor to the high drop-out rate. Native pupils are frequently derided for their manner of dress and for their lack of "manners". The White towns feel that Metis simply just are not interested in the education and general welfare of their children! Whites also maintain that Metis offendors are better off in correctional institutes because conditions there are

better than at home! Whites will not give credit to Natives; if they do atrocious rates are charged. Churches would just as soon not have Native members! It is felt that in most areas the Churches have done more harm than good. There are exceptions however, as it was pointed out to the Group. Nowhere is help and encouragement given to bridge the cultural gap. Agencies such as Manpower, Forest and Wildlife and Welfare do discriminate against Natives.

A. Alcoholism, Division of

This meeting was with P. Fraser, director of education and services, and with L. Phillips, associate director, Division of Alcoholism.

Policy Statements were the object of discussion. The services and facilities of the Division are available to all who are judged having an alcohol problem. The Division strives to work with people at home and in the courts. A five day training program in problems and treatment of alocholism is offered. With regard to treatment, emphasis is on giving necessary attention to the individual in his home and community. To date there are no Natives on staff. Many however are patients. The Division does not attempt to set up programs in any area, but rather will assist groups in the running of their respective programs. Natives are invited to apply for employment with the Division. The Division is most ready to assist in Metis Colonies and communities anywhere in the Province.

B. ARDA, Department of Extension, Human Resources Research Council, Inter-cultural Education Committee

a. ARDA Projects: Some specifics of the ARDA approach were discussed. The onus is on a community to submit a project proposal to ARDA for purposes of obtaining a loan. The community concerned has to establish a society or a co-op, and register such. The government approved loan is obtained from a bank. The approval means that the Government will pay the loan should the group not be able to pay it back. Such loans are interest and principal free for a period of five years. Because of this money can be made on the loan during the five year period. Payments are required come the sixth year.

b. Department of Extension: This university department has five divisions: Community Resource Development Division, Liberal Studies Division, Public Administration Division, Fine Arts Division, Business Administration Division. An audio-visual aids section supplements the preceding. All courses offered by Extension pay for themselves.

Of particular interest is the Community Resource Development Division. This year leadership training programs are being offered in Banff. Native peoples are eligible for training. Seminars in human relations are also being organized around the Province.

If Metis would like the University to offer programs for them, it is they who have to organize and raise the necessary funds for such programs. The policy is to respond to communities and their needs.

The Department of Extension would like the Metis Association to serve as a liason between them and the Metis groups around the Province.

c. Human Resources Research Council: The origin and genesis of HRRC was explained to the group. It was pointed out that the Council is still at the phase of policy development. Such policy is developed on the basis of research. The Council is now contemplating action in the following areas: 1) social opportunities for individuals - the individual in the inner cities; the individual in rural cities; manpower and economic development; 2) individual approaches to human growth and development, e.g. computer assisted learning; individually prescribed instruction; 3) program evaluation - welfare; education; health, youth.

A research person is being considered for each of the last four areas. Negotiations are underway with a professional person who will focus on Native problems.

d. Inter-cultural Education Committee: This committee is made up of professors from various disciplines. It is headquartered in the General Services building under the guidance of Dr. L. Gue. It is striving to provide orientation programs for students, materials for teachers and educators who are going to work in Native communities. A move is being made to have Natives to conduct courses for students in the Inter-cultural Program.

C. City of Edmonton

The City was represented by Alderman T. Nugent and a representative from the Social Planning Committee.

It was explained that the agencies and services available to Edmonton citizens will be gradually expanded to include people from outside areas. Social Planning has one employee whose function is to help people moving to other areas.

The question was raised as to whether the City would be prepared to take it upon itself to obtain homes for Natives when the latter cannot obtain such because of discrimination. The issue wasn't settled. But it was pointed out there are laws, if enforced, would alleviate the situation. Also City Police answer to City Council. There is a real problem of communication between the Police and Native youth. Offenders should be judged according to the merits of the situation.

D. Community Development Services:

J. Macko, G. Armstrong and J. Couture were interviewed by the Group. A review of C.D. philosophy was made. The Group explained the various questions raised by rural communities concerning the C.D. service. The relationship between the C.Y.C. and C.D.O.'s was discussed, together

with the impact of personnel changes out in the field.

Because of its experimental nature, as a member of the Group pointed out, C.D. runs into difficulties. There are many who do not understand C.D. The good of this service becomes apparent when people learn what their rights are and get consequently organized. This causes tension, but this is inevitable and is healthy. Because of the C.D. program during the four years of its existence much has begun to change within the Native community throughout the Province. The present restructuring that is going on because of its inclusion within the Human Resources Development Authority framework is viewed as being a good thing. More co-ordination is needed - C.D.O.'s motivate people, get them going to do things for themselves, then run up against Government who is not ready to give them the service they require.

Initially a C.D.O. divides people - they hate him or like him. Ultimately however over a period of several years people come around to fully co-operating with their C.D.O. C.D.O.'s are not experts in any particular field. Their primary purpose is to motivate people, give them the information they need, and direct them to the agencies that can reply to needs. The position of J. Couture as working full-time for Native communities on a provincial basis was viewed with favor.

E. Company of Young Canadians

The meeting was with the Director of the Slave Lake C.Y.C. project. The basic philosophy of the C.Y.C. is a community development one. The Company strives to create change in communities. Projects are defined geographically. The C.Y.C. comes at the invitation of a community or group of communities. For example, it was Faust in the Lesser Slave

Lake area that invited the C.Y.C. to come. There are presently six workers in the area; three more will be added. The present contract will expire in March of 1970. One Native from the area is part of the Team. He has had difficulty being effective. It does seem, on the basis of experience across the country, for a worker to be effective in his home area.

An assessment of C.Y.C. effectiveness indicates that at their arrival the people were apathetic. They are now angry, and are now communicating with one another. They are beginning to get organized. The Provincial Government is now showing particular concern for the area, whereas before there was little apparent interest.

The responsibility of the C.Y.C. is the community and not to any other group or authority. The role of the project co-ordinator is to identify roles of members, to administer the project, to hire and fire personnel.

F. Co-operative Services; Farmers' Union of Alberta

The following points were made during the discussion with representatives of the Co-operative Activities Branch and of the F.U. and C.D.A.: no Native workers are employed by the Co-op Branch; qualification standards are too high at this time for such hiring; there are only two field workers at the moment; no monies are available to train Natives; the importance of communication between Natives and non-Natives does not appear to be recognized; the F.U. & C.D.A. does have some money for training of Natives; letters from communities to the Service have not been answered; a lack of co-ordination between related government departments seems to detract from the Service's effectiveness.

There are 38 Native Co-ops in Alberta at the moment. These groups are organized in the areas of logging, milling, fishing, housing, handicrafts and school buses. Community Development Services as such are completely independent of Co-operative Activities Branch.

The Group made the recommendation that a Native be hired by the Service to liaison with Native Communities. The meeting ended with further discussion of role: the service exists primarily to give assistance on how to co-operate and how to deal with the problems that such entails. The F.U. & C.D.A. does provide resource people and materials to local groups. Such a service is at no cost. They are also prepared to pay all costs of young people who would be interested in training courses.

C. Education

The Group presented to the Deputy Minister, Dr. Reese, their findings from the field.

The Department does not have a policy concerning Metis who live off the Colonies. The problem of foreigners in Alberta schools presents difficulties. The Northland's system of bursaries and subsidies attracts foreign teachers. It is very difficult to obtain sufficient numbers of Canadian teachers. He recognizes that parents want to have their children bussed to school so that they may live at home. However there is a real problem in trying to operate small high schools given the demands of society for a certain level and quality of education. Teachers should treat Metis without discrimination. A real orientation program is needed for teachers going into schools that have Native children.

The content of present history books needs to be quickly changed. Teachers have been advised that certain chapters because of their biased content are not to be used. Cree should be taught at some point in the school program, as well as proper Indian history.

With regard to discrimination that is encountered the Metis should report directly to their school boards. The same privileges given to Metis on Colonies should be accorded to those living off the Colonies. Upgrading programs should be provided to Metis.

H. Health

This meeting with the Health officials was highly esteemed by the Group. It was very frank and pleasant. The substance of the discussion is as recorded below.

Points of policy in reply to descriptions of conditions in various communities were presented. Municipal and preventive health services are free except for medication. The Department is not aware that certain nurses are charging for their services. This situation and that of certain doctors will be looked into. It was pointed out that Natives can be members of health bonds. The reply was that the Natives were not aware of such possibility. There is an imperative need for people to become more involved rather than to remain dependent on government. The Natives are really quite afraid to come forward. The Department representative found this difficult to understand. The Department is going to check into areas where it is claimed that there is water contamination .

The North of the Province is operated for health services in conjunction with Indian Affairs. People do not seem to realize that the Alberta Health Plan card is for the doctor and not for the nurse. It is the patient's responsibility to see to his own transportation. There is

a need for a permanent ambulance service in all out-lying areas. In the hospitals nurses do not properly tend to Native patients. Native ward aids and nurses do not dare interfere or complain for fear of losing their jobs. The Department of Health has no say in the day-to-day operation of hospitals.

The meeting ended very cordially with Dr. Ross showing much appreciation for this opportunity to share concerns and discuss solutions.

I. Human Resources Development Authority

A. Meeting with Mr. F. Colborne, Minister responsible: The purpose of the HRDA was outlined to the group by the Minister.

At present time with regard to the Metis we are not dealing directly with them. We are however preparing office facilities for them, and programs and policies are being implemented at the present time with regard to Metis problems. We have affected the Metis inasmuch as we have helped provide C.D. services throughout the Province. C.D. has had its problems, somewhat like the C.Y.C. To go ahead in a community for purposes of solely stirring it up isn't a very good idea. A C.D.O. is not intended to be a go-between Government and the people. There is a need for persons to prepare people with regard to the operations of Government (channels, red-tapes etc.) and to prepare people in Government to receive people from rural communities. There is a problem in the area of communications with the people. We are presently trying to find the gaps and fill them. We are, for instance, experimenting with the idea of area co-ordinators. There is one presently in the Slave Lake area whose responsibility is to determine the needs and desires of the people. This kind of information is necessary in order to set forth

meaningful programs which involve the people concerned.

Wherever C.D.O.'s have worked there is now more activity among the people. It is possible that were the C.D. service to be run by Native people it would be more efficient. There should be emphasis on the part of C.D.O.'s in their motivation efforts to work on civil servants as well as on the local inhabitants. If communities desire C.D. service they should send their requests to Mr. Oberholtzer, Director of HRDA. People should be free to decide where they want to live, and to that end land should be made available.

B. Meeting with J. Oberholtzer, Director of HRDA: The Director pointed out that throughout his campaign Mr. Strom stressed the HRDA program. He is now ready to go to work. The findings of the Tour will be seriously considered in terms of a Metis Project. The whole situation of Metis on and off colonies will be seriously reviewed.

Our office is not a department. Our task is to co-ordinate across departmental lines and to help with programs organized by different departments. We have been influential with regard to the Northlands' School Act. We have been active in the Wabasca area. The Community Development Services reports directly to this office but is left free to work as it sees fit. Their effectiveness is dependent of their personality, attitudes and ability to work with people.

J. Human Rights

The Group met with Mr. French and Mr. Henders. Points of rights as such and of procedure were discussed.

On what basis and where does discrimination take place? race, religion, public places, on the job, etc. If a person isn't qualified

for a job, then refusal of employment is not a case of discrimination. There are employers who fear losing business if they hire members of a given ethnic group. It happens that discirmination occurs without the employer's knowledge, e.g. a secretary at the desk may discriminate. Human Rights trys to attempt to get evidence of such instances. They do not however help in setting up a case, e.g. having a person refused a room at a hotel. Written reports by the person discriminated against is the requirement.

Given present legislation, nothing can be done about discrimination that takes place in apartments or private dwellings. Pressure needs to be brought to bear on legislators for a more extensive law regarding human rights. When it comes to wages and getting fired, the Board of Appeal is the Board of Industrial Relations.

We do need a Native worker. It is our experience that by and large Native people know so little about their human rights. At the present we do not have a budget that would allow us to expand our services.

K. Lands and Forests

Under the Green Zone law no agriculture is permitted. Metis on or off colonies are treated like Whites. The arrangements that the Department has in terms of land leases, grazing leases, permits for agriculture, are equally available to Metis as to other groups and individuals.

The people of Grande Cache do not have land rights. They have met with Government and have submitted proposals. HRDA is investigating their claims at the present time. To this time our department has not interfered with Metis living on Crown land. The question of settlement isn't an easy one. There is the problem of locating schools and roads.

The Green Zone law is a long term arrangement in order to assure timber and successful reseeding, and preservation of game. The people of Grande Cache are to be reassured of no difficulties arising from the Jasper Park expansion.

No individual can charge for the use of roads, nor charge for recreation areas on Crown lands.

L. Law-Attorney-General's Department

The Group presented the requests for Native court workers throughout the Province. There at the moment are four such workers in three centers (Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge).

The question of definition of Metis was debated. Most agencies exist for Whites. When a Metis, who is part Indian and part White, walks in it is assumed that he is wholly Indian and is therefore refused service. There is a definite barrier between Whites and Metis.

The future is not encouraging for the Metis unless the Government does something. There is a liquor problem which cannot be solved overnight. In terms of percentages we are not aware of the degree of Native alcoholism. Complaints concerning police roughness or brutality are to be reported and will be investigated. Indian and Metis should be encouraged to enter law. High school graduates, ability to work with people, good character, these are some of the requisites to become a probation officer. Legal aid is available to all persons earning less than 2000 dollars. Such aid is available only for criminal offences, not for such offences as petty thievery, common assault . Areas requiring Native workers are Lac La Biche, Hinton, McMurray, High Prairie, St. Paul, Peace River. Recommendations of persons for such positions should be sent in to the Attorney General's office.

M. Manpower

The Group found this meeting to be very disappointing. The Manpower representatives were condescending in attitude. However several points of interest were discussed.

Manpower strives to find the qualified people required for available job opportunities. Selection is not made on the basis of creed or color. Two thousand are presently in training at N.A.I.T. because of Manpower grants. Grade eight and 17 years of age are the two requirements for training at N.A.I.T. Jobs are not guaranteed. It is up to the employer to hire the trainees or not. Changes in Manpower personnel are being made around the Province. We are not aware that there are Natives on Manpower staff. It is not our function to motivate people to make certain decisions.

The Group reported that Manpower representatives are noted for giving the run-around to applicants. The reply was that when anyone comes in for help he is not over-looked but is put on a list for consideration when openings become available. The oldest on the waiting list are given preference.

Manpower also provides apprenticeship programs. In addition to the training, living allowance is granted till the termination of training, The person with ability and drive is the one who will succeed.

The meeting closed on the assurance that whenever instances of poor service by Manpower representatives occurs, if reported to the Head Office, they will receive attention.

N. Metis Rehabilitation Branch

With two or three weeks notice this Branch can provide monies to cover costs of participation in training courses. Courses on such things

as alcoholism, adult education can also be provided. There is a budget but it is limited.

The procedure for entrance as a member in a colony was discussed. The Branch itself does not provide assistance to university candidates. These must seek help through sources available to the general public. The Branch does strive to help Metis students contact such services.

There is a housing assistance program. Unfortunately the funds available for that purpose are really limited. In East Alberta the Branch offers cattle loans on the basis of the recommendations of the local colony council.

The functions of the colony manager are to carry out the instructions from the Branch Office and to work closely with the local people. The Branch tries to hire people with knowledge of farming and with high school background. No particular training is given him by the Branch. Their instructions are that they are to work in terms of colony members wishes and problems. The salaries offered are not high enough to attract university graduates to this kind of work. If Natives can qualify they will be given the job of supervisor. Presently there are three Native storekeepers. The complaints that come to this office are always investigated. The Metis should feel free to come and present their criticism.

It is necessary for welfare workers to consult with the colony supervisors in order to find out who is working and who is unemployed. Welfare rates are not determined by the Metis Rehabilitation Branch. The problems arising from the purchase of poor materials is not directly a Branch responsibility. It will however be investigated. Once a member

has built up his herd through Branch assistance he then begins to pay his loan because he can now afford it.

O. Ombudsman

The function of this office is to investigate complaints. The important point is that it is an appeal that must be referred to the ombudsman. This office cannot handle family matters, the problems of private companies such as telephone companies. The Ombudsman can investigate any government department service, demand to see their files, give summons, approach any official. Another service is recommend to the Government desirable and desired changes. If officials will not act on recommendations, the Ombudsman function was instituted to serve the little man. The Metis can avail themselves of this service.

P. Native Organizations

The Tour Group met with representatives of the Alberta Native Communications Society, the Indian Association of Alberta, the Indian-Eskimo Association. The entire meeting focussed on descriptions of the purpose and function of the respective groups. No griefs or problems were presented to any of the representatives for discussion. The reader is referred to other sources then for descriptions of these organizations.

Q. Political Parties

A. N.D.P.: This party was represented by Mr. Wright. The NDP has no particular policy with regard to the Metis. The Party is aware that the Metis need help. The focus of party policy has been on the little man regardless of color or creed. Government handouts are not the answer.

The Metis should be given the same services as the Treaty Indian. The Metis should be given the opportunity to be equal. They should organize themselves. The NDP would support such efforts.

B. P.C. Len Derry represented Mr. Lougheed of the Conservative Party. Government must be aware, and if not, be made aware of the desires and needs of the people. Community Development has an indispensable role. The Party is concerned with the Metis as people. They are a forgotten people.

R. Welfare

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of the Department of Welfare, indicated to the Group that his department is in the process of developing new policies and programs. There is a drive on to have staff members make personal reports setting forth suggestions for improvement of the Departments services.

The services presently offered by each of the Divisions of the Department were reviewed with the Group. One change in law that the Department has been successful in obtaining is with reference to the adoption of children. Parents can now adopt children of a faith different from their own. Such a legal change now facilitates increased adoption. All of the services of the Department are available to Metis as citizens of the Province. The name "settlement" will be substituted for that of "colony", given the somewhat derogatory connotation of the latter term. The Department pays for 80 per cent of the costs of social service and development programs, the remainder is the responsibility of the community. This arrangement is presently under review. Land presently leased to Metis can be neither bought or sold. Are the Metis to the

point now where they are prepared to accept title to land? The Government is not prepared at this time to set up more colonies. However it is recognized that there is a serious land problem, that land development and other services are necessary in order to provide for the needs of many Metis, living off colonies.

No decision was reached with regard to the problem of food vouchers and the restriction imposed on recipients as to where they may have these vouchers honored. It was also pointed out that no real steps have yet been taken to deal with the problem of alcohol in Metis communities.

Chapter Three - Recommendations

On the basis of 14 days of intense observation and discussion, the Tour Group formulated the following recommendations:

1. Follow-up

It is recommended that there be an annual observation tour, similar to the one just concluded, to immediately precede the Metis Association's convention. Such tour should be longer in order to allow two or three days in each community.

When subsequent tours meet with government agencies arrangements should be made so that the interviews are held only with the top heads and directors of these institutions. No substitutes should be accepted. In time sequence, visits to the communities should precede the meetings with agencies.

Prior to the tour going to the field, an organizer should be sent out in order to assure that posters etc. be distributed, that the necessary contacts be made. When in the City, time should be set aside each day in order to review the findings, write up the day's report, and prepare strategy for the next set of meetings. There should be more money available to such tours. Three groups rather than two would have been more officient and thorough.

2. Land

The Association should see to having a serious and definite study made of the land problem as it affects Metis not living on colonies. It is to be noted that the majority of Metis live off or away from the established Metis colonies. This land question is particularly striking and acute in such areas as Grande Cache and Fort Vermilion. The land

question is intimately involved in many of the Metis' difficulties.

3. Court Workers

It is recommended that as soon as possible the Association see to having Native court workers, fluent in the language of the area, appointed to St. Paul, Lac La Biche, Ft. McMurray, Lesser Slave Lake District, Hinton and Peace River.

4. Liquor Offences

The Attorney General's Department needs to be approached with the recommendation that people be given time to pay liquor offences, rather than having to go immediately to jail when money is not at hand.

5. Field Workers

Alcohol education is needed urgently. It is felt that the Division of Alcoholism should hire field workers who would be assigned to cover Native communities for purposes of education.

6. Welfare

The Tour Group vigorously insists that Welfare officials at all levels begin to treat people as people, and that there be a thorough investigation into the discrepancies that exist between welfare recipients living in urban centers and those inhabiting rural areas and this with regard to welfare allowances.

7. Police

It is felt that there is a great need for the Association to draw up a brief setting forth the cases of police abuse throughout the Province of Native people. It is suggested that the possibility of a Native ombudsman be investigated.

8. Native Dropouts

There are far from enough counsellors to watch and care for Native Students in the school centers that they are sent to. It is felt that this would contribute considerably to lowering the drop-out rate, which is of alarming proportions.

9. School Buses

It was observed many times during the Tour that the Northland School Division is unquestionably remiss in maintaining regular bus service. A striking example of such neglect is in the Paddle Prairie area where because of school bus breakdown pupils had to miss over a month and a half of school.

10. Family Allowance

It was discovered that in more than one center families were being unjustly penalized by school principals who would have the family allowance removed when children through no fault of their own failed to attend school.

11. Teachers

The recommendation was made many times to the Group that Northland hire Canadian teachers only, that salaries be made more attractive, that there be an intensive and extensive orientation course for all teachers going into the Division's schools.

12. Colony Supervisors

It is strongly recommended that present and future colony supervisors be or become community and human development oriented, and that such appointments be given to Natives.

13. Communication

The Association needs to make every effort and use all available means to establish itself at the grass-roots level.

14. N.A.I.T.

The Association should investigate what appears to be a serious difficulty arising from Metis entrance to N.A.I.T. particularly and to other Provincial technical schools in Alberta. There seems to be unlimited possibilities for Treaty Indians to gain access thereto, but always a limit to acceptance of Metis applications.

15. Cree

Some agency, such as HRDA, should foster and encourage the Cree language. The University should recognize Cree (or any other Native language) as acceptable in fulfillment of second language requirements.

16. Leadership Training

Some agency, such as the Department of Extension of the University of Alberta, should be encouraged to organize and sponsor a leadership training team that could work regularly and systematically with Native communities throughout the Province.

17. Company of Young Canadians

The principle underlying this institution is recognized and accepted. However, many individual members of the C.Y.C. have contributed to giving this organization a doubtful reputation. It is recommended that some effort be made by the Metis Association to have this group markedly improve its image.

18. Metis Conference

At some time during the spring of 1969 a "think-in" type of conference for Metis should be organized by the Association. Such an activity and others are needed to foster, uphold and develop a Metis involvement movement now beginning.

19. Manitoba Indian-Metis Conference

It is strongly recommended that the Association sponsor two delegates to attend the 1969 Manitoba conference.

20. Tax Deduction

Donations of any size (as low as one dollar) should be tax deductible when made to charity.

21. Public Relations

The Group suggests that the Association would do well to appoint a public relations officer for purposes of raising funds for the Association.

22. Grande Cache

The people of this area request that the Community Development Officer of the region be able to spend more time in their community because of the problems that they are now confronted with, e.g. land, school attendance.

Appendix

The following is a brief presented to the Association by Rene Lamothe, university student:

" I speak in the name of the majority of the Native university students. We have limited this brief to: education at the grade school, high school and university level.

Grade schools should be near the homes. The children would then be able to live at home. The parents would then have a purpose for living. The parents would then see the need to accept the responsibility of their children.

Grade schools should be near the homes, because 1) the twice annually recurring semi-traumatice (and for some traumatice) experience of the Native child moving from the cultural expectations of the Native to the White and back again causes the loss of interest of education on the part of the Native students and the high drop out rate in the elomentary and junior high schools; 2) the Native student in this age group has to cope not only with the confusion brought on by nature's drive from childhood to maturity, but also by the confusion brought on by cultural differences as well. The accumulation of these matural and unnatural difficulties are too much for the one student to cope with by himself, particularly when there is no one to understand him; 3) the unnatural blocks to education, such as families broken by the system, are unnecessary.

High schools should be integrated. Students should come to understand both societies. Students should live at home and commute to school.

At the University the student is on his own.

Education should be reorganized along lines which recognize cultural

differences. One direct step which could be taken in this regard is as follows: The Department of Education should make compulsory to all education students, subjects such as those dealing with cultural differences, as well as courses indicating the modes of knowing of different peoples - such a course is the sociology of knowledge.

Professors in university should also take courses of orientation along these lines, to prepare themselves for the cross section of societies they come into contact with.

This would give some orientation to those who have never experienced any other than their own cultural milieu. This would help teachers and professors to become aware of and to respect the differences of the cultures. We must begin somewhere.

The power of knowledge is sought for the well being of the people, for the well being of mankind. In view of this, it is not good that ignorance destroy people, even if the person destroyed is a student; and so much greater the wrong if the person destroyed is not a person but a people in their economic, social and cultural viability. It is for this reason that students and professors even in the sciences should learn of other peoples' expectations, modes of communicating etc. Even in the sciences, professors and students have axes to gring; they would be wise to inspect the texture of the stones (people) on which they grind them.

This brings us to our final point on education (for the time being) that the students today should seriously evaluate their present stand on the developing currents in man's relations with man, because peaceful coexistence demands mutual respect. Respect is not based on fear, it is based on knowledge of the other."

differences. One direct step which could be taken in this regard is as follows: The Department of Education should make compulsory to all education students, subjects such as those dealing with cultural differences, as well as courses indicating the modes of knowing of different peoples - such a course is the sociology of knowledge.

Professors in university should also take courses of orientation along those lines, to prepare themselves for the cross section of societies they come into contact with.

This would give some orientation to those who have never experienced any other than their own cultural milieu. This would help teachers and professors to become aware of and to respect the differences of the cultures. We must begin somewhere.

The power of knowledge is sought for the well being of the people. for the well being of mankind. In view of this, it is not good that ignorance destroy people, even if the person destroyed is a student; and so much greater the wrong if the person destroyed is not a person but a people in their economic, social and cultural viability. It is for this reason that students and professors over in the prisons should learn of other peoples' explanations, modes of communicating etc. Even in the sciences, professors and students have come to grips; they would be wise to inspect the texture of the stones (people) on which they erind them.

This brings us to our final point of discussion (for the time being) that the students today should carefully evaluate their present stand on the developing currents in man's relations with man, because peaceful co-existence demands mutual respect. Respect is not based on fear, it is based on knowledge of the other."

CA2A LHU 30
68 M27

ALBERTA

LEGISLATURE LIBRARY
216 LEGISLATURE BUILDING
EDMONTON, ALBERTA